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Identical letters dated 24 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the twenty-seventh report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) (S/2016/460).

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms the positions that it has previously communicated in its identical letters addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council responding to the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015). It would also like to stress the following points:

1. The Syrian Government deplores the lack of professionalism of the Secretariat team responsible for drafting the monthly reports on the humanitarian situation in Syria, of which the present report is the most recent, for the following reasons:

- The authors of the report deliberately ignore the fact that successes achieved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to beneficiaries in both stable and unstable parts of Syria in the past years and months, most recently in April 2016 (as detailed in paragraphs 16, 19, 20 and 43), would not have been possible without the assistance and facilities provided to the United Nations and international organizations by the Syrian Government. The Secretariat's failure to mention that in the report is deliberate, and intended to conceal and downplay the Syrian Government's crucial role in providing assistance to Syrians in both difficult and easy-to-reach areas.
- The humanitarian question continues to be politicized and used to accuse the Syrian Government of falling short, even as the authors of the report justify the crimes and violations committed against civilians and infrastructure in Syria by armed terrorist groups and the so-called international coalition.
- The facts set forth in the Syrian Government's monthly responses to the Secretary-General's previous reports are deliberately ignored. One instance worth noting is the failure to update the erroneous information included in previous reports and the present one on the number of United Nations requests approved by the Syrian Government for the delivery of joint or individual

humanitarian assistance to unstable areas. The number of foreign non-governmental organizations authorized to operate legally in Syria has also not been updated.

- The authors deliberately ignore the Syrian Government's repeated attempts to draw the Secretariat's attention to the urgent need to monitor the impact of the unilateral coercive economic measures — imposed illegally against Syria for more than five years by the European Union, the United States of America, certain Arab countries that have become involved in the Syrian bloodshed, Canada, Australia and others — on the humanitarian situation and living conditions of Syrian civilians in all parts of the country.

2. The Syrian Government reiterates that it is unacceptable for the Secretariat to rely on sources of information that are neither credible nor trustworthy, such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which, in turn, relies on allegations and unreliable sources of information and relays its reports from Beirut, far from where the events are taking place, through parties friendly to the terrorist organizations. For example, paragraph 6 of the report mentions that "on 23 April, information collected by OHCHR indicates that 12 civilians, including a child, were killed in an air strike that hit a local market and a residential building in eastern Aleppo." However, the Russian side's investigation confirmed that there were no Syrian planes in the area at that time. The Syrian Government finds it deplorable that the authors of the report condone terrorist crimes committed by terrorist organizations and characterize them as acts of violence. The Syrian Government once again rejects the Secretariat's attempts, in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9, to draw an equivalence between counter-terrorism activities and the terrorist acts perpetrated by such terrorist organizations as Islamic State in Syria and the Levant (ISIL), the Nusrah Front and the armed groups affiliated with them and with Al-Qaida, including the terrorist groups that rain down mortar shells on Aleppo daily, and those that perpetrated the recent massacre in Zarah in Hama governorate. Those groups also include the terrorist Ahrar al-Sham group that claimed responsibility for the terrorist bombings in the coastal cities of Jablah and Tartus on 23 May 2016. The Secretariat's approach in this regard indicates clearly that it shares the bias of those sources of information and of certain influential States on the Security Council whose aim is to tarnish the image of the Syrian Government and its allies and undermine their counter-terrorism efforts.

3. The Syrian Government is astonished by the contradictions in the report. Some paragraphs accuse the Syrian Government of falling short, while others (such as paragraph 16) mention that the Syrian Government continued to provide basic services to most regions of Syria. How can those two claims be reconciled?

4. The Syrian Government is surprised that the authors of the report deliberately neglect to mention that the Government approved the delivery of medical supplies to all regions of Syria, with the exception of surgical implements, which it wanted to keep from falling into the hands of armed terrorist groups, and atropine. The Syrian Government urges the United Nations to inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of any difficulties encountered by delivery operations, so that those difficulties can be addressed. The Syrian Government is also amazed that the authors of the report accuse it of shortfalls when they themselves recognize in paragraph 43 that the Syrian Government granted the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) approval to deliver

medical assistance to several unstable regions of Syria. Moreover, on 15 April, with the Syrian Government's approval, WHO delivered dialysis equipment to the Red Crescent branch in Duma in Rif Dimashq. Since 9 February 2016, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has been delivering humanitarian assistance, medical services and dental treatments in Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham in Rif Dimashq. Recently, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was granted approval to deliver a shipment of medication, assistance and medical supplies to the Urum, Kafr Hamra, Tall Rif'at, Nubul, Zahra and Yakhur areas in the Aleppo countryside.

5. The Syrian Government deplores the partiality that the authors of the report continue to show to Turkey, at the expense of the hundreds of thousands of affected civilians in Hasakah governorate who are suffering as a result of the Turkish Government's closure of the Nusaybin border crossing and its deliberate refusal to approve United Nations requests to deliver humanitarian assistance to Hasakah governorate through that crossing for well-known political reasons. That crossing has not been temporarily closed owing to security concerns since December 2015, as stated in paragraph 27. Meanwhile, it is widely known that the Turkish Government continues to allow the Bab al-Hawa and Bab al-Salamah crossings to be used despite the fact that armed terrorist groups deployed on both sides of both crossings are seizing the assistance being sent. The Syrian Government is astonished that the United Nations, certain members of the Security Council and those involved in the humanitarian work of the International Syria Support Group have made no effort to pressure the Turkish Government to immediately permit the delivery of assistance to Hasakah governorate through the Nusaybin crossing.

6. The Syrian Government reiterates its position that cross-border assistance is futile, and condemns once more the Secretariat's insistence on covering up the fact that the assistance continues to fall into the hands of known armed terrorist groups. The notifications sent to the Syrian Government do not meet the minimum standard of credibility in terms of figures, information, numbers of beneficiaries and particulars on which parties collect aid to distribute it to civilian recipients. The Syrian Government deplores the Secretariat's attempts to inflate the number of aid beneficiaries into the millions in areas where the population is merely in the thousands! In that context, the Syrian Government reiterates that the United Nations monitoring mechanism cannot verify that cross-border assistance is reaching its rightful beneficiaries. It is also surprised that the Secretariat is ignoring the recent outbreak of corruption, exposed by international reports, in the delivery of cross-border assistance by international relief organizations, some of which sent spoiled vaccines for children. The Syrian Government opposes the significant increase by the United Nations in the amount of cross-border assistance at the expense of assistance provided from inside Syrian territory. It has been proven that assistance distributed inside Syria can be monitored and evaluated and that its delivery to beneficiaries can be verified.

7. The Syrian Government deplores the authors' deliberate and exclusive focus in their monthly reports on the terrorist Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) organization, while they turn a blind eye to terrorism perpetrated by the Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups allied with it or linked to Al-Qaida in the areas where those groups have a presence. Anyone reading the current report would conclude that ISIL is the only terrorist organization in Syria. The last few days have provided fresh examples of terrorist groups active in Syria that share ISIL's

bloodthirsty ideology but are unfortunately classified by some as the "moderate armed opposition" and considered by others to be part of the political solution to the situation in Syria. In the last few days alone, the Ahrar al-Sham, Army of Conquest (controlled by the terrorist Nusrah Front), Free Army, Levant Front and other organizations have killed hundreds of innocent victims, injured thousands and disrupted the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Those groups have rained down mortar shells and gas cylinder missiles on Aleppo, Homs and Jablah, and planted explosives in residential neighbourhoods, Recently, on 23 May, they were responsible for tragic terrorist bombings in the cities of Jablah and Tartus in Tartus governorate, which have welcomed hundreds of thousands of displaced persons fleeing governorates and areas where armed terrorist groups are active.

The Syrian Government strongly rejects the blatant and repeated whitewashing by the Secretariat and the Office of the Resident Coordinator and, in particular, the Damascus office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), of the terrorist Nusrah Front organization and the other armed terrorist groups connected with it and with Al-Qaida, which include Ahrar al-Sham, the Levant Front, the Army of Islam, the Army of Conquest, the Free Army and other groups. The Syrian Government deplores the authors' deliberate omission of the names of the armed terrorist groups involved in the violent clashes cited in paragraphs 26 and 40. If certain United Nations offices in Damascus persist in falsifying the facts, we will be forced to stop dealing with them openly and readily.

8. The Syrian Government reiterates that it continues to reject the use by Secretariat officials of the term "non-State armed groups" to describe such terrorist organizations as ISIL, the Nusrah Front, Al-Qaida and groups linked to or cooperating with them that receive foreign support and funding from several Governments, notably those of Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. That constitutes a flagrant violation of Security Council counter-terrorism resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations.

9. The Syrian Government approved 19 requests for access to hot spots (unstable areas) out of a total of 26 requests submitted by the United Nations under the May plan. Only three joint humanitarian assistance convoys have been dispatched thus far (to Eastern Harasta, Qadsiya and Hamah). Two United Nations assistance convoys were also sent to Bludan and Qaryatayn at the Syrian Government's request. Requests have been approved for the following:

- Delivery of relief assistance to Madaya, Bludan, Qadsiya, Kafr Batna, Ayn Tarma, Irbin, Siqba, Hammuriyah, Jisrayn, Bayt Siwa, Hazzah, Eastern Harasta, Zabdin, Zamalka, Aftaris, Muhammadiyah, As'ari and Nashabiyah in Rif Dimashq governorate; Tadmur, Qaryatayn and Hulah in Homs governorate; Kafraya and Fu'ah in Idlib governorate; and Harbnafsah, Qal'at al-Madiq and Kafr Zayta in Hama governorate;
- Deliver of medical assistance, school materials and baby milk to Mu'addamiyah and Hamah in Rif Dimashq governorate and to Rastan in Homs governorate;
- Delivery of relief assistance to Qabun and Yarmuk camp in Damascus governorate;
- Delivery of medical assistance, school materials and baby milk to Duma in Rif Dimashq governorate;

- Delivery of textbooks that conform to the Syrian Government's educational curriculum, along with vaccines and relief supplies for children, including milk, to the Darayya area.

10. The Syrian Government finds it deplorable that the Secretariat should distort the facts about what happened on 12 May 2016 concerning the agreed-upon delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Darayya area, which is covered in paragraph 36. The fact is that the joint humanitarian assistance convoy (United Nations agencies, ICRC, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent) was unable to enter the city of Darayya on 12 May 2016 for the following reasons:

- The Government approved the delivery of medical assistance, school supplies and baby milk to the city. On 12 May, the joint assistance convoy arrived. It comprised four trucks and 13 cars that were transporting United Nations and ICRC staff in staggered groups, violating the existing procedures that had been agreed upon with the United Nations. On the night of Wednesday, 11 May 2016 and at dawn on Thursday, 12 May 2016, violent clashes broke out, pitting Syrian Arab Army forces against terrorist groups belonging to the Nusrah Front and various armed terrorist groups associated with it. Two Syrian Arab Army soldiers were killed and five others were injured, creating tension in the area.

- Upon inspection at the last Syrian Arab Army checkpoint, it transpired that the four truckloads did not include all the assistance approved for delivery, but did include some odd extraneous items. The convoy contained five emergency shipments, each of which was sufficient for six months, and which exceeded the needs of the number of civilians as calculated by the United Nations. Is the United Nations trying to supply enough emergency kits to provide the terrorists with long-term health care so that they can continue to indiscriminately fire rockets and shells at civilians in Damascus and its suburbs indefinitely?

- A disagreement arose among the team members. As a compromise, the Syrian Arab Army soldiers proposed to the United Nations side that the vaccines should be delivered before they spoiled and that the children should start being vaccinated pending resolution of the issue regarding the rest of the convoy's contents. However, the United Nations side refused, and threatened to abort the entire mission, insisting on either entering with the convoy's entire contents or returning. The Syrian Government refused to submit to coercion, especially since it had already approved a United Nations and ICRC delivery to Darayya scheduled for 17 May 2016. Nevertheless, they stated that they had not been able to enter Darayya for their own logistical and administrative reasons and that it had gotten too late to go in. They also cited the unstable security situation, even though the Syrian Arab Red Crescent was quite prepared to deliver assistance at that time.

11. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its long-standing position that the crisis in Syria requires a political solution based on dialogue among Syrians under Syrian leadership and without preconditions. It further stresses that the political approach goes hand in hand with counter-terrorism efforts, which will continue until all of the armed terrorist groups active in Syria have been eradicated. In that connection, the Syrian Government reminds the Secretariat that the Geneva meetings are meant to lead to a political solution, not some other result.

It furthermore reminds the Secretariat that the success of those meetings and any significant improvement in the humanitarian situation will depend, above all, on creating a climate conducive to a serious and non-politicized international and regional commitment to fighting terrorism and on an immediate end to the unilateral coercive economic measures being imposed on the Syrian people with no legal or moral basis.

12. The Syrian Government does not approve of the authors' inclusion in the report of information that is inaccurate and out of date, and even contradicts itself within the same report. Paragraph 43 of the report mentions that WHO and other organizations had access to millions of beneficiaries across Syria, including in unstable areas, naturally with the approval and facilitation of the Syrian Government. However, that same report accuses the Syrian Government of shortfalls in approving the delivery of assistance. With regard to the authors' allegations about obstacles to the delivery of medical assistance, we wish to clarify that, from the beginning of 2016 to the present date, the Syrian Government has approved 11, not five, WHO requests to deliver medical assistance to the following governorates and regions: Duma in Rif Dimashq; Raqqah governorate; Ayn Arab, Shaddadah and Ras al-Ayn in Hasakah governorate; Yabrud, Assal al-Ward, Bayt Sawa, Kafr Batna, Irbin, Zamalka, Zabdin and Mulayhah in Rif Dimashq; Idlib governorate; Jindayris, Raju, Shiran, Sirrin and Dayr Hafir in Aleppo governorate; Rastan, Talbisah, Qaryatayn, Tadmur/Palmyra and Tall Daww in Homs Governorate; Qal'at al-Madiq, Ziyarah, Kafr Zayta, Murak, Suran and Si'in in Hama governorate; and Karamah, Ayn Isa and Suluk in Raqqah governorate. It should be pointed out that the Syrian Government recently approved several requests from WHO to deliver medical assistance, including vaccinations for H1N1 influenza, to Duma in Rif Dimashq and to Raqqah, and to provide dialysis sessions in Duma in Rif Dimashq.

13. The Syrian Government reiterates its rejection of the Secretariat's attempts to equivocate regarding the so-called besieged areas, as it does in paragraph 31 of the report, notably by inflating or downplaying the numbers of inhabitants in those areas according to its whims in order to serve the agendas of certain parties in the Organization. In its previous responses to the reports of the Secretary-General, starting in August 2015, the Syrian Government has repeatedly tried to correct the Secretariat's errors. For example, the number of people besieged in Dayr al-Zawr was 300,000 rather than 110,000, as stated in the Secretary-General's report. That raises several questions about the Secretariat's motive for downplaying the number of civilians in Dayr al-Zawr. Is it doing so to reduce the already limited amount of humanitarian assistance earmarked for the city? The same applies to the Kafraya and Fu'ah areas, where the United Nations amended the population count to 20,000, even though we had determined that the towns have a combined population of 35,000. The Syrian Government is astonished that, when discussing the siege of Yarmouk camp, the United Nations says that it has a population of 10,000. We repeat that this is a fatuous idea, and there is no justification for including it in such reports. Does the Secretariat want the Syrian Government to leave the road wide open for terrorist groups belonging to ISIL and the Nusrah Front that are present in Yarmuk camp to enter Damascus? The Syrian Government reiterates that Duma and Darayya are both hubs for such armed terrorist groups as ISIL and the Army of Islam.

14. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again calls on the Security Council to prevail on those States that support and finance armed terrorist groups to refrain from doing so, in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on combating terrorism and terrorist financing, particularly resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015). Compliance with and enforcement of those resolutions is the key to resolving the situation in Syria and delivering an unprecedented amount of humanitarian assistance to those in need in Syria.

I should be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annexes issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex I to the identical letters dated 24 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Crimes committed by ISIL, the Nusrah Front, the Free Army, the Army of Islam, the Army of Conquest and other armed terrorist groups ignored by the authors of the report

- In the period 21 March to 21 April 2016, terrorists killed 154 civilians, including 26 children, and injured 393 civilians, including 83 children, across the governorates of Syria, not including Raqqah and Idlib.
- On 23 May, the ISIL and Ahrar al-Sham terrorist organizations claimed responsibility for the terrorist bombings in the cities of Tartus and Jablah. The blasts killed over 162 people, injured hundreds more and caused significant material damage.
- On 1 and 2 April, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called ISIL organization fired mortar shells at the Harabish neighbourhood of Dayr al-Zawr city, killing one civilian and one child, and injuring one other child with shrapnel. Material damage was caused. On 4 and 5 April 2016, those groups fired mortar shells at the Qusur and Harabish neighbourhoods and Jafrah village, killing 14 civilians and injuring 17 others.
- On 3 and 4 April, an explosive device planted by terrorist groups in the northern part of the town of Ruhaybah in Rif Dimashq was detonated, injuring three children.
- From 4 to 6 April, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Islamic Front, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and Northern Shield located in the Rashidin, Bani Zayd, Sayf al-Dawlah and Bustan al-Basha neighbourhoods of Aleppo fired gas cylinders at the Halab al-Jadidah, Western Shaykh Maqsud, Maydan, Hamdaniyah and Masjid al-Rahman neighbourhoods, killing 10 civilians and injuring 21 others. Material damage was caused. On 7 and 8 April 2016, those terrorist attacks killed and injured 13 civilians, including women and children.
- From 9 to 11 April, in Aleppo governorate, armed terrorist groups located in the outskirts of Khan Tuman fired artillery shells and gas cylinders at Wadihi village, injuring three children. Armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Islamic Front, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and Northern Shield located in the Bani Zayd and Bustan al-Basha neighbourhoods of Aleppo fired gas cylinders at the Western Shaykh Maqsud and Maydan neighbourhoods, killing and injuring four civilians. Material damage was caused.
- On 16 and 17 April, attacks by the same armed terrorist groups killed six civilians and injured 26 others in the Maydan and Khalidiyah neighbourhoods, the Salah al-Din neighbourhood opposite the municipal stadium, and the Hamdaniyah neighbourhood in Aleppo.

- On 11 and 12 April in Homs governorate, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front terrorist organization in the towns of Tayr Ma'lah and Talbisah fired rockets at the Karm al-Lawz, Nuzhah, Arman and Zahrah neighbourhoods, injuring seven civilians. Material damage was caused.

- On 11 and 12 April, in Dar'a governorate, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front terrorist organization fired mortar shells at the city of Dar'a. The mortar shells landed on Dar'a National Hospital and the airport neighbourhood, injuring nine civilians and causing material damage.

- On 18 and 19 April, in Hama governorate, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, Ahrar al-Sham, Army of Conquest and Suqur al-Ghab terrorist organizations in the north of the town of Kafr Nabudah fired mortar shells at the city of Suqaylibiyah, killing and injuring three civilians.

- On 23 and 24 April in Damascus, armed terrorist groups fired mortar shells and 23 mm rounds in the Abbasiyin, Arnus, Maliki, Barzah and Tadamun neighbourhoods of Damascus, injuring three civilians. In Rif Dimashq, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Army of Islam, the Nusrah Front and the Rahman Corps in the towns of Irbin and Harasta opened fire and launched dozens of mortar shells at the Asad suburb in Harasta, the Wafidin camp, the women's prison, the branch compound and surrounding area, and the new municipal building. Two women and one child were killed, and civilians, some of whom were children, were injured. Material damage was caused.

- From 24 to 28 April, in Aleppo governorate, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Islamic Front, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and Northern Shield located in the Rashidin, Bani Zayd, Sayf al-Dawlah, Bustan al-Basha, Amiriyah, Bustan al-Qasr, Old City, Lirmun and Karm al-Maysar neighbourhoods of Aleppo opened fire and fired mortar shells and gas cylinders at the Mogambo, Jamiliyah, Ansari, Bustan Kulayb, Jam'iyat al-Zahra', Aleppo airport, Sulaymaniyah, Bab al-Faraj, Ashrafiyah, Maydan, Suryan al-Jadidah, Manshiyah al-Qadimah, Nile Street, Sayf al-Dawlah, Maysalun and other neighbourhoods of Aleppo, killing 41 civilians and injuring 268 others. Significant material damage was caused.

Annex II to the identical letters dated 24 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Examples of humanitarian assistance that was delivered during April 2016 thanks to the facilitation provided by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations and other international organizations, in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. Also listed is assistance delivered by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid (food and non-food aid and medical assistance), provided from inside Syrian territory by United Nations organizations, to various governorates, including Rif Dimashq, Dayr al-Zawr, Aleppo, Qunaytirah, Hasakah, Homs, Hama and Dar'a, but not to Raqqah or Idlib governorates. Some 1,884,680 Syrian beneficiaries (376,936 families) received food parcels provided by the World Food Programme through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. Some 1,275,820 beneficiaries (255,164 families) received food parcels provided by the United Nations through non-governmental organizations. The total number of the beneficiaries of United Nations assistance distributed from inside Syrian territory thus stands at 3,160,500 (452,290 families). The above-mentioned assistance was distributed to the governorates by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent as follows: 53,250 parcels in Rif Dimashq; 25,955 parcels in Dar'a and its countryside; 8,413 parcels in Dayr al-Zawr; 52,768 parcels in Aleppo and its countryside; 866 parcels in Hasakah; 44,809 parcels in Hama and its countryside; and 59,729 parcels in Homs and its countryside.
- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid provided by ICRC from inside Syrian territory to Damascus, Rif Dimashq, Qunaytirah, Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Suwayda', Dar'a, Ladhiqiyah and Tartus governorates. A total of 145,577 food parcels were delivered, in addition to 63,998 canned food parcels and food aid for community kitchens. An additional 28,694 parcels provided by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies were distributed in Homs, Damascus and Aleppo governorates.
- The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid (food and non-food aid, medical assistance, water purifiers, wheelchairs, baby food, women's health products and birthing kits) provided by United Nations organizations and eight foreign non-governmental organizations operating in Syria to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries in Aleppo, Hasakah, Rif Dimashq, Dar'a, Qunaytirah, Damascus, Homs, Hama, Suwayda', Tartus and Ladhiqiyah governorates.

- From 2014 through 23 May 2016, a total of 139,382 food parcels and 44,980 medical parcels have been delivered to the inhabitants of the camp by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. That is in addition to the ongoing operation to provide non-food aid, other foodstuffs and medical care. We also note that the Palestine refugees in Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham are inhabitants of Yarmouk camp who were displaced from the camp after the terrorist organization ISIL overran it in April 2015 in collusion with the terrorist Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups present inside the camp.

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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Identical letters dated 24 May 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Further to the letter of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov, dated 18 May 2016, on the recent escalation of the situation at the line of contact of the armed forces of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the border between the two States, I would like to draw your attention to the latest gross violation by the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia of the ceasefire agreement of 5 April 2016, reached in Moscow between the Chiefs of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, with the assistance of Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

The armed forces of Armenia, while concentrating additional forces and military equipment at the line of contact, shelled Askipara village of the Tartar region of Azerbaijan using a phosphorus bomb that coincidentally missed its prime target. The bomb landed on cultivated cotton fields and was found as an unexploded ordinance by the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action on 10 May 2016. It should be noted that this case was observed and documented on 11 May 2016 during the visit to Askipara village of 20 representatives and military attachés from 13 countries, as well as field assistants of the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference (see annex).

In accordance with general international humanitarian law, attacks on civilians or civilian objects or attacks on forests or other kinds of plant cover (like the cultivated area in Askipara village) with white phosphorus shells are prohibited under the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Incendiary

Weapons (Protocol III) of the United Nations Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects of 1980.

I would like to highlight that Armenia, with the intentional strike against civilian objects of Azerbaijan using high explosive white phosphorous, grossly violates its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, such as the 1949 Geneva Conventions, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention. A weapon containing white phosphorus can also qualify as an "incendiary weapon or device" under the 1997 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, to which Armenia acceded in 2004. Alongside the Republic of Armenia's responsibility as a State for internationally wrongful acts, violations by Armenia of international humanitarian and human rights law during the conflict amount to crimes under international criminal law.

In this respect, we reiterate our appeal to the international community to condemn Armenia for such blatant violation of international law and the ceasefire regime, to demand strict compliance by Armenia with the 5 April 2016 ceasefire commitments and to engage constructively in substantive talks on the withdrawal of the armed forces of Armenia from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 35 and 40, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Khanum Ibrahimova
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex to the identical letters dated 24 May 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement on the use of white phosphorus bomb by the armed forces of Armenia against civilians and civilian objects of Azerbaijan

In recent escalations and offensive actions starting 2 April 2016, the armed forces of Armenia, in numerous instances of deliberate shelling on civilians and civilian objects of Azerbaijan with artillery and large-calibre weapons, have also used shells containing chemicals such as white phosphorus.

One such projectile was shelled on Askipara village of the Tartar region of Azerbaijan, coincidentally missing its prime target and landing on a cultivated cotton field, and was found as an unexploded ordinance by the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action on 10 May. If it had landed on the densely populated part of Askipara village, the projectile would have inflicted serious casualties and injuries among the civilians.

Military attachés of foreign embassies accredited in Azerbaijan have been immediately informed of the fact of usage of such a weapon by Armenia against Azerbaijani civilians. This case was observed and well documented on 11 May 2016, during the visit to Askipara village of 20 representatives and military attachés from 13 countries, as well as field assistants of the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on the conflict dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference.

The investigation has revealed that ammunition, which was fired by the armed forces of Armenia, is a D-4 type (smoke bomb) 122 mm artillery shell. It weighs 27.07 kg and contains 3.6 kg of P-4 (the chemical code of white phosphorus).

The Special Investigation Unit of the Republic of Azerbaijan Military Prosecutor's Office inspected the territory where the shell was found. The Republic of Azerbaijan Military Prosecutor's Office has initiated a criminal case upon this fact under the following articles of Azerbaijan's Criminal Code: articles 29,120.2.7 (attempt to kill two or more people), 29,120.2.12 (attempt to kill on ethnic, racial or religious grounds) and 116.0.16 (use of weapons, means and methods of warfare prohibited by interstate agreements during an armed conflict). A preliminary investigation into the fact is under way in the Republic of Azerbaijan Military Prosecutor's Office.

Witness accounts, photographs of the case (see photographs below), video footage from the defusing of the shell (the explosion emitted a dense white smoke) (see the video link http://mod.gov.az/index2.php?content=news/2016/20160511_attasecebhe), as well as the trajectory of fire, present numerous pieces of evidence that the shell which belonged to Armenia is a white phosphorus bomb and was fired from the nearby positions of the armed forces of Armenia.

It is well known that weapons containing white phosphorus are extremely toxic when inhaled, ingested or absorbed through burned areas and can have severe negative impacts on human health. Such weapons cause severe thermal and

chemical burns of partial to full thickness upon contact with the skin, often down to the bone. Absorbed through the skin white phosphorus can survive long enough in the human body to damage the heart, kidney or liver, leading to multiple organ failure or death.

In accordance with general international humanitarian law, attacks on civilians or civilian objects or attacks on forests or other kinds of plant cover (like the cultivated area in Askipara village) with white phosphorus shells are prohibited under the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Incendiary Weapons (Protocol III) of the United Nations Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions of Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects of 1980.

Armenia, with the intentional strike against civilian objects of Azerbaijan using high explosive white phosphorous, grossly violates its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, such as the 1949 Geneva Conventions, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention.

A weapon containing white phosphorus can also qualify as an "incendiary weapon or device" under the 1997 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, to which Armenia acceded in 2004. The Convention applies to any "explosive or incendiary weapon or device that is designed, or has the capability, to cause death, serious bodily injury or substantial material damage" or to a weapon that has these effects through toxic chemicals, biological agents, toxins or radiation.

Alongside the Republic of Armenia's responsibility as a State for internationally wrongful acts, violations by Armenia of international humanitarian and human rights law during the conflict amount to crimes under international criminal law.

The Republic of Azerbaijan urges the international community to condemn Armenia for such blatant violations of international law.

White phosphorus bomb shelled by the armed forces of Armenia against civilians and civilian objects of Azerbaijan

Type: D-4 White Phosphorus shell

Detonating fuse: RGM-2

Colour: Khaki or grey

Case: Metallic

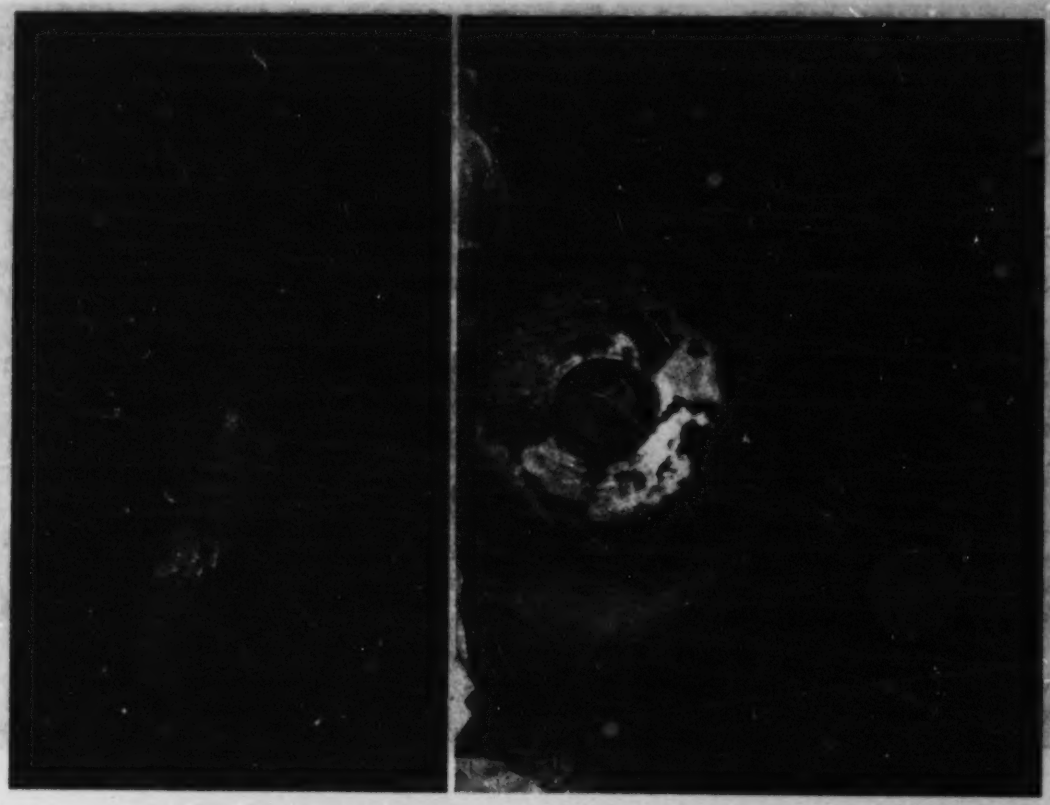
Assignment: Smoke shell

Composition: 3.6 kg of P-4 (chemical code) white or yellow phosphorus

Weight of the explosive: 0.145 kg TNT (trotyl)

Calibre: 122 mm

Length: 496.6 mm



Defuse of the found shell